



Funding the Special Education Safety Net *2024 Supplemental Operating Budget Decision Package*

Recommendation Summary

The state budget provides funding dedicated to serving students with disabilities in Washington’s schools. The funding is based on an enhanced basic education rate that varies depending on the learning environment in which students with disabilities participate in learning activities. The Safety Net program provides additional funding to address extraordinary costs associated with the services provided to students with exceptional needs. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) requests that the Legislature provide additional funding for state fiscal year 2024 to align with the actual expenditures paid in August 2023.

Fiscal Details (Funding, FTEs, Revenue, Objects)

Operating Expenditures	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
General Fund State - 01	\$44,116,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Opportunity Pathways – 17F	\$34,000			
Total Expenditures	\$44,150,000	\$0	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$44,150,000		\$0	
Staffing	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
FTEs	0	0	0	0
Average Annual	0		0	
Revenue	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
General Fund State - 01	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Biennial Totals	\$0		\$0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
Obj.	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Package Description

What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

OSPI received more requests for Safety Net funding than what was provided in the 2023 budget. Safety Net funding is provided for high-need individual students, and for local education agencies serving more than 13.5% of their resident student enrollment (for school year 2022–23) through a valid Individualized Education Program (IEP).

What is your proposed solution?

This request is for the state to provide the additional funds needed to reconcile OSPI's current appropriation level for Safety Net with the actual cost of Safety Net applications paid in state fiscal year 2024 (July/August 2023 payments).

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

This funding provides reimbursement for allowable expenditures as identified by local education agencies and reviewed and approved by the OSPI-led Safety Net Committee.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for all public-school students is a federal requirement that has been funded through the Safety Net appropriation and process since 1995. Due to the history of the Safety Net being funded to ensure equitable opportunity to a basic education, we did not consider other alternatives.

Performance Measures

Performance outcomes:

Safety Net provides reimbursement to local education agencies for the extraordinary costs expended to provide special education services to students with disabilities. These services are required per the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of students with disabilities to ensure the provision of a free, appropriate public education leading to high school graduations and improved post-secondary outcomes.

Assumptions and Calculations

Expansion or alteration of a current program or service:

None. This is simply a needed funding adjustment.

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

The 2023 Legislature funded Safety Net through the State General Fund and Opportunity Pathways Account at \$106,995,000 for fiscal year 2024.

Actual Safety Net costs as submitted by local education agencies and reviewed and approved by the Safety Net Committee are as follows:

Individual High-Cost Students

Awarded Applications: 4,832

Average Award: \$31,866.13

Estimated Cost: \$153,977,157

Community Impact

Estimated Cost: \$11,953,334

Total Estimated Cost: \$165,930,491

Less Federal Revenue: \$14,787,000

Estimated State Funds: \$151,143,491 (paid in August 2023 apportionment)

Based on these calculations, the needed additional investment for Safety Net for state fiscal year 2024 is \$151,143,491 less \$106,995,000, or approximately \$44,150,000.

Workforce assumptions:

None.

How our Proposal Impacts Equity in the State

At the forefront of every program, policy, and decision, OSPI actively focuses on ensuring all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools. The presence of Safety Net for special education funding ensures equitable opportunities to basic education for all communicates and populations in Washington.

Strategic and Performance Outcomes

Strategic framework:

This funding ensures that districts are provided resources to be reimbursed for costs associated with providing a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities.

Other Collateral Connections

Intergovernmental:

None.

Stakeholder response:

N/A

Legal or administrative mandates:

None.

Changes from current law:

None.

State workforce impacts:

None.

State facilities impacts:

None.

Puget Sound recovery:

N/A